

1. Convene the meeting.

Chairman Binette convened the Board at 7:04PM. Also present was William Campbell, Lionel Ingram, Joseph Pace, Robert Eastman and Town Manager George Olson.

2. Minutes of December 1, 2003 Selectmen's meeting.

Mr. Campbell moved to waive the reading of the minutes and to accept them as submitted; second by Mr. Pace. VOTE: Unanimous.

3. Proclamation for Human Rights Day.

Mr. Ingram read the attached proclamation.

4. Request to address the Board – Al Lambert, Al's Auto Body.

Mr. Lambert was present to publicly thank the police and fire departments for the work done during his recent business fire and burglary. He presented certificates to Chief Brian Comeau for the Fire Department's professional work in saving his business, as well as saving the neighborhood, during the multi-alarm blaze, and to Chief Richard Kane for the Police Department's work in solving the arson and burglary of his business and bringing the person to justice. He noted there was more to this type of work than he ever imagined.

5. Request to address the Board – search for joint Hampton/Exeter District Court- Peter Goodwin.

Mr. Goodwin, Administrator for State's Bureau of Courts, noted an on-going discussion of 10-12 years to consolidate the courts, several still housed in Municipal buildings, and having money set aside for the design of this consolidation. He reported the State is about to begin the process and has received ideas of property location from both Seabrook and Hampton. Usually, in the case of Court location, the State accepts land to hold build a court in that Town. He also reported two State parcels in and around Exeter they are considering. In 2004, he will be meeting with towns involved in the jurisdiction of the Exeter and Hampton Courts to discuss locations. He is willing to sit with Boards of Selectmen to review ideas and concerns. He will continue to keep the Board informed of the process. With no immediate questions from the Board, Chairman Binette thanked Mr. Goodwin for the update.

6. Cost adjustment for Planning Resource Documents – Fee Schedule change.

As noted in the previous readings, the increase in costs is related to printing, coupled with the complexity of the documents. Documents involved include: Zoning Ordinance from \$15 to \$20; Master Plan from \$20 to \$35 and HDC Preservation Guidelines from no fee to \$10.00.

Mr. Eastman stated he agrees with the increases on the Master Plan and HDC Guidelines but that the Zoning Ordinance represents a 50% mark-up. After some discussion and input from Sylvia von Aulock, Town Planner, **Mr. Eastman moved to amend the Fee Schedule to increase the Master Plan fee to \$35 and to add the Historic District Commission Preservation Guidelines to the list at \$10, and leaving the Zoning Ordinance at its present cost; second by Mr. Campbell. VOTE: Unanimous.**

7. Recommended 2004 Town operating budget and warrant articles.

Mr. Olson referred the Board to his memo of December 1st regarding the Budget Committee's and Water/Sewer Advisory Committee's action on the budget and Board's continuation of that process (attached). Included in his memo is the recommendation of four adjustments to the budget recommended by the Budget Committee.

#1405 – Town Clerk Part-time payroll: With the original request for 20-hours per week, year round, eliminated by the Budget Committee, Mr. Olson recommended considering \$4,530 for a clerk at 15 weeks, 25 hours per week. The additional elections and increasingly busy office would be assisted at those busy times. This information is based on an earlier memo presented by Town Clerk Linda Hartson and HR Director Barbara Blenk. The cost is inclusive of all associated costs. Mr. Ingram asked to please note the addendum in the footnotes of the budget, if approved. **Mr. Campbell moved to approve the request and add \$4530 to account #1405; second by Mr. Pace. VOTE: Unanimous.**

#2296 – Town Hall Building maintenance: Mr. Olson recommended adding \$14,000 to the account for some obvious needed improvements: \$1,000 for emergency lighting, \$8,000 to replace the carpets and \$5,000 for bathroom facilities on the second floor. Mr. Olson stated he agrees with the second floor bathroom, as there is not one there now. He feels the carpeting could be held off, as the District Court may not be there in a couple of years, particularly when the appropriation for the carpeting was made once before and spent elsewhere. **Mr. Ingram moved to authorize all three items be included in the budget, and to be specific on expenditures for such; second by Mr. Pace. VOTE: 3-1.**

CIP – Town Hall, Exterior Brick Repair: Mr. Olson requested \$15,000 for reconstructing and remodeling the concrete entrance to the Chamber/District Court, based on the current condition being a safety hazard.

Mr. Eastman questioned the \$15,000 total and his belief the Maintenance Department has a history of miscalculating estimates. Mr. Noyes noted the amount is estimated on labor for the contractor, based on past contracts and estimated time. Mr. Campbell asked if there is a chance the project could go over \$15,000? Mr. Noyes stated yes, but we would limit it. He reminded the board the original plan called for this repair to be part of the 4-year repair plan. **Mr. Campbell moved to include \$15,000 into account #2296 for the entryway repair at the Court/Chamber; second by Mr. Pace. VOTE: 3-1.**

Mr. Eastman moved to remove \$40,000 for Town Hall window repair from the warrant article list and to incorporate the amount into the operating budget under Job Class #94, Capital projects; second by Mr. Ingram. VOTE: Unanimous.

CIP – Town Office, Interior Upgrade Design: Mr. Olson recommended a \$25,000 warrant article for a detailed study of building use options, as well as preliminary design and cost estimate for suggested solution. Mr. Binette asked of the study previously completed. Mr. Olson reported that probably cost

\$5,000 and was in 1996 with a two-page drawing. Mr. Eastman noted that did not change the square footage use of the building. Mr. Ingram cautioned if the Board was thinking of a new building, Town Office Center, but to have the study analyze how best to carry out the functions now in the space and to focus on what should happen. Two years ago the Budget Committee recommended at Town-wide building analysis, to which the Board did not agree. **Mr. Pace moved to request the Town Manage draft a warrant article, to be considered on the 5th, to the extent of tonight's discussion; second by Mr. Ingram. VOTE: Unanimous.**

Mr. Pace questioned the two remaining social service agencies the Budget Committee recommended for \$0 funding as their financial reports had not been received by the deadline for review. These are New Outlook (requesting \$2,000) and Aids Response of the Seacoast (\$1500). Mr. Pace noted they have since been received but after the Budget Committee ended their review. Mr. Ingram noted the Board should re-enforce the issue of requests going before the BudCom first (while they are in meetings).

Julie Mills, Community Liaison for New Outlook noted the Director received the original letter and, when called the office, told was all set as they are not scheduled as a warrant article. Mr. Pace did not know who they spoke with but, whether or not they are a warrant article or not (agencies rotate as warrant article every three years), financial information is required as noted in the letter. **Mr. Eastman moved to approach the agencies with a letter indicating if they wish to apply with a petition they will be placed on the ballot as a warrant article; second by Mr. Pace. VOTE: Unanimous.**

In line with placing items in the budget vs. the original request of a warrant article, Mr. Eastman asked for reconsideration of the Lincoln Street storm sewer project. Last year, \$40,000 was appropriated but this was \$40,000 short of the total cost. **Mr. Eastman moved to request \$40,000 in Job Class #94 (Capital Outlay projects) for the Lincoln Street storm sewer, to total the required amount. No second.**

Mr. Olson reminded the Board the default budget prior to this evening's decisions was at \$602,000. He feels the \$40,000 as a warrant article may have a greater success than causing the default figure to be more than \$700,000. Mr. Ingram felt it was explained to the voters that not enough money was appropriated, and explain the difference in the default and the reason why it is up, the voters would understand. It was decided this would remain a warrant article.

Mr. Campbell questioned the additional System Operator in the Water/Sewer budgets, noting most other positions has been eliminated except for the I-T person and Police position. Victoria DelGreco explained the person could replace very outdated and old meters, which, in turn, would provide better recording of water use and increase revenues, particularly with the increased rates – the billing must be fair and accurate. She noted the original request of having this contracted out was discussed and vetoed by the W/S Advisory Committee. Mr. Noyes reported 5-6 years ago, 5 people worked in Maintenance/Distribution and now only 3. This additional person would assist these three, as well as help in other areas when needed. It was determined this additional person would not affect rates.

Mr. Campbell noted that due to scheduling problems, he could not make the W/S Committee meetings as the Board's representative. He feels it would be better to contract the work out. **Mr. Eastman moved to not support the hiring of a meter installer; second by Mr. Campbell. VOTE: 3-2.** Ms. DelGreco will take the vote to the W/S Committee to determine an estimated appropriation to cover the problem, as well as a timeframe for full replacement.

Mr. Eastman questioned the new vehicle with plow included in the W/S budget. He noted the BudCom disagreed with Public Works getting any new trucks and stated there are many pick-ups in Town. **Mr. Eastman moved to remove the pick-up and plow from the Water & Sewer budgets; second by Mr. Pace.** Ms. DelGreco stated the truck is not an additional vehicle but will replace the smaller pick-up that has been taken off the road due to significant rust and is of no value to the Town. The newer vehicle is intended for the Maintenance Technicians, as they are the first responders to pump stations and occasionally need to plow the area as other, larger plows are busy plowing arterial roads. Mr. Binette questioned Mr. Noyes on why the smaller trucks aren't used on the smaller routes. Mr. Noyes stated they may use them as back-up but the routes are set up with two teams. Mr. Binette asked if the Town has a Fleet Manager to view warranty information and watch dates, mileage, etc. carefully. Mr. Noyes replied the Maint. Superintendent handles this. Mr. Eastman noted the additional information of replacement vs. additional helps in his decision. **VOTE: 1-3.**

Jack Sheehy, Finance Director, presented the bottom line budget, as amended. **Mr. Campbell moved to accept \$15,382,186; second by Mr. Ingram.** It was noted this is an increase of 6.9% over last year's budget and a \$50,000 differential from the default. **VOTE: Unanimous.**

Warrant Articles: Mr. Olson reviewed the list as recommended and approved by the Budget Committee (p. 2 of 12/01 memo). Unless noted, the Board agreed with the list as presented.

Town Hall - Fire rated stairwell, \$45,000: Mr. Eastman expressed great concern over the 'estimated' amount, noting Mr. Hamel – a member of the Budget Committee – estimated \$15-20,000. Mr. Eastman preferred re-welding of the treads and railings on the outside escape, noting it unreasonable to spend \$45,000 and move the fire escape inside the building. He also recommended establishing a preventive maintenance program. Mr. Noyes stated the increased use of the second floor calls for a better fire escape to handle the egress and feels it would be a greater hazard with people, especially the elderly, going down an outside fire escape. Board agreed with a warrant article.

Town Offices - Interior update design: Board agreed to \$25,000 in earlier discussion.

Sr. Center - \$125,000 renovation remains not recommended

Fire Station: Mr. Eastman stated he hopes to convince the Board to not pursue the new building and presented a response timing presentation based on a two-year infrastructure study. He suggests keeping the station at the present location in the more highly assessed/consolidated area and continue with a sub-station on Epping Road as has been proposed over the years. He noted 'response' times refers to the incidents, and not to the full area of the Town and this feature is missing from the monthly reports – response time to incidents. He feels there is not enough data available to assume a new station should be provided. Also, once the fire department gets a new station, the police will then have new issues. With the water treatment plant proposed this year, he feels it is not a good year to present a full new fire station.

Mr. Eastman moved to not support the new fire station on Epping Road; second by Mr. Ingram. Much discussion followed concerning manning issues, third ambulance, location, and NFPA recommendations concerning second stations vs. population. Mr. Campbell congratulated the Committee on a great report but has a problem with doubling the current staff and, though they have certainly proven themselves as a valuable service, it is a huge expense that continues to grow.

Chief Comeau responded to several items brought forth by Mr. Eastman, one being the initial goal was not 90% of the Town in 4 minutes but bringing the 4-minute response to 75% of the calls. Manning is an issue but the theory is not etched in stone and, with the third ambulance due in 2005, there is no housing and no additional manning planned. The budget will be reduced by \$200,000 with the change in the Charter. Mr. Ingram noted there are several options available with personnel. The building will be there and could house vehicles, though it would not be necessary to man the station 24/7. If a sub-station were to be the option, what would the argument be? Chief Comeau stated manning levels would not be changed as there is a minimum of 4 for fire; 3 for ambulance. Without these minimums, more overtime would be incurred. Moving the main station would free up space for the police department and get the vehicles inside, rather than being outside and, in one instance, being stored at the training site in Brentwood.

Mr. Eastman stated a survey of data may show when most calls come in – the sub-station could be manned during those times. Chief Comeau stated the contract would then need to be rewritten. Mr. Binette stated that, based on the current questioning, the Board should have been at the Fire Station Committee meetings. **VOTE: 2-3.** The station will be included on the warrant.

Engine 2 Refurbishing: \$65,000 is recommended.

Public Works:

Guinea/Hampton Road intersection \$270,000: Mr. Eastman stated with \$100,000 in hand from a developer to complete the project, this should be supported or the Town loses the money. There is an additional \$35,000 promised from the school, which would account for one-half of the cost of \$270,000 (Town appropriates all the funds, revenues off-set half). Board agreed to include in the warrant, being sure to emphasize the funds do not include installation of a traffic light (though conduits will be installed underground for any future possibilities).

Reconstruction of roadways \$500,000 – recommended.

Water/Main Street intersection \$225,000 – not recommended.

Lincoln Street storm sewer \$40,000 – previously discussed.

Lantern Lane separation \$115,000 – recommended.

Recreation: Pool renovations \$100,000 – recommended

Bus fund \$15,000 – recommended.

Water/Sewer: The Budget Committee had no action on the two items (Water treatment plant \$15,510,000; Portsmouth Avenue sewer \$400,000) as they were recommended by the Water & Sewer Advisory Committee.

Mr. Olson recommended the following dates for hearings on the budget and warrant articles: Monday, January 12th for bonds and budget; Deliberative Session on Saturday, February 7th. Notices will be posted well in advance of meetings, with one also for Tuesday, January 20th (if necessary) should any petitions for warrant articles be received by January 13th (final day to receive) but too late for the meeting of the 12th.

8. Warrant Article carry-overs from 2003 to 2004.

Mr. Olson reported this action is to carry over warrant articles for another year, necessary in those instances where all or a portion of the work funded this past March will not be under contract by December 31, 2003. Funds under contract for projects that come out of the operating budget or warrant articles are automatically carried over into the next physical year. Funds from the operating budget not under contract revert to the General Fund; funds from warrant articles not under contract may be carried over by vote of the Board. He requested action on five articles: # 21 -Bandstand Roof; #28 – Park Street bridge span; #30 – construction of Lincoln Street storm sewer; #32 storm water system study, and #23 Fire Station Design. ***Mr. Pace moved to authorize the carry over of all requested; second by Mr. Campbell. VOTE: Unanimous.***

9. Authorization to cross Jolly Rand Trail.

As part of the process of constructing access to RiverWoods' new 'Ridge' development, the Technical Advisory Committee and the Planning Board agreed that a crossing of Jolly Rand Trail was appropriate. Public access to Jolly Rand Trail along the new private entranceway to The Ridge is provided 4 parking spaces for users of the Trail. The Selectmen have the authority over the use of the Trail as noted in RSA's concerning Class B trails. ***Mr. Campbell moved to sanction the crossing of Jolly Rand Trail by RiverWoods "The Ridge"; second by Mr. Eastman. VOTE: Unanimous.***

10. Town Manager authorization to accept State Aid payments for sewer disposal facilities.

Mr. Pace moved to authorize the Town Manager to act on behalf of the Town of Exeter in negotiating for and accepting any and all State Aid payments in connection with sewage disposal facilities in Exeter; second by Mr. Eastman. VOTE: Unanimous.

11. Permits:

- The Dean Campaign requested use of the Town Hall, Wheelwright Room, Bandstand and Nowak Room on Monday, December 22nd from 9AM to 3PM. Mr. Olson noted the Bandstand is available but he has concerns over the safety of the people in and around the area. He recommended use only if traffic control is reviewed and accepted by the Police Department. He does not recommend use of the Wheelwright and Nowak Rooms due to possible disruption during office hours. ***Mr. Campbell moved to approve use of the Town Hall and the Bandstand, with traffic control reviewed by the Police Department; second by Mr. Eastman. VOTE: Unanimous.***
- Rockingham Democratic Committee requested the Town Hall on Sunday, January 11th from 9AM to 4PM for a candidates' forum. ***Mr. Eastman moved to approve; second by Mr. Campbell. VOTE: Unanimous.***
- ECCA requested permission to use the Town Hall on January 17th from 1-4PM for a student music presentation. ***Mr. Campbell moved to approve; second by Mr. Pace. VOTE: Unanimous.***
- Rockingham Planning Commission requested use of the Nowak Room on January 29th from 6:30-10PM for a Seacoast MPO Policy meeting. ***Mr. Campbell moved to approve; second by Mr. Pace. VOTE: Unanimous.***
- Winterfest requested use of the Bandstand on January 13th and the Town Hall on January 14th from 9AM to 3PM. ***Mr. Campbell moved to approve; second by Mr. Eastman. VOTE: Unanimous.***

- Project Prom/Project Graduation requested use of the Town Hall on January 13th for a Comedy night from the audience. *Mr. Campbell moved to approve; second by Mr. Pace. VOTE: Unanimous.*

12. Town Manager's Items:

- Parking ban is in effect with no parking on streets from 12 midnight to 6AM till March 15th.
- Next meeting is January 5th.
- Town offices will close at 2PM on December 24th with employees utilizing vacation and personal time to cover the remainder of the day. The office will reopen on Friday, December 26th.
- Rubbish and recycling will not be collected on Christmas and New Years' Day, but delayed one day. Thursday's will be Friday; Friday's will be Saturday.

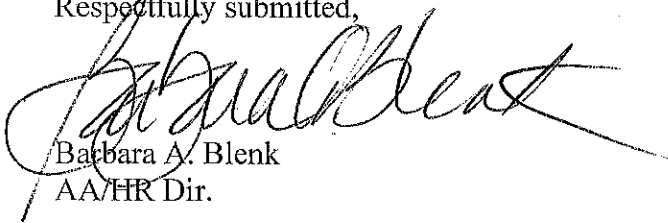
13. Selectmen's Committee Reports:

- Mr. Pace: Tuesday, the Master Plan was discussed. January will have more open sessions for input. As with the rest of the Board, he participated in the Christmas Parade on Saturday. The Committee did a great job. In 40 hours, he'll be in a New Zealand.
- Mr. Ingram: Council on Aging and Safety meetings this week. The Linden Street Re-use committee is meeting and will review the report going to the School. He urged residents to still get involved and provide suggestions on what Exeter wishes to do with the buildings. He expects no decision soon.
- Mr. Campbell: Conservation Commission continues to meet twice per month – Tuesday.
- Mr. Eastman: Planning Board meets Thursday to begin discussing zoning amendments.
- Mr. Binette: With no meeting the rest of the year, on behalf of the Board he thanked all those who supported the Board during the year and urged all to think of those overseas working to protect our rights. He wished all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

14. Public Comments: None.

Mr. Eastman moved to adjourn; second by Mr. Pace. VOTE: Unanimous. Time: 10:00PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Barbara A. Blenk
AA/HR Dir.